

CITY OF MILWAUKIE
DESIGN AND LANDMARKS COMMITTEE
NOTES
Ledding Library Pond House
2215 SE Harrison St
Monday, March 13, 2017
6:30 PM

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Lauren Loosveldt
Michael Corrente
Cynthia Schuster
Scott Jones

STAFF PRESENT

Brett Kelper, Associate Planner (staff liaison)

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

1.0 Call to Order – Procedural Matters

Member Scott Jones agreed to lead the meeting in the interim before new officers were elected.
Member Jones called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

2.0 Design and Landmarks Committee Notes

2.1 February 6, 2017

Member Jones called for revisions to the notes. There were none, and the notes were approved unanimously.

3.0 Information Items – None

4.0 Audience Participation – None

5.0 Public Meetings – None

6.0 Worksession Items

6.1 Downtown Design Guidelines Update, cont. (photo updates)
Staff Person: Brett Kelper, Associate Planner

Associate Planner Brett Kelper opened the ongoing discussion by recounting his recent discussion with Planning Director Denny Egner about the Downtown Design Guidelines (DDG) update project. Director Egner had reviewed the committee's proposed amendments to the "Milwaukie Character" guidelines and did not consider the changes to be a radical departure from the existing guideline language. He had questioned the suggestion to eliminate the "gateways" guideline (DDG page 14) as well as the shift in perspective (from inside a building to street level) regarding "view opportunities" (DDG page 15). Mr. Kelper had attempted to explain the group's rationale for the various amendments, and it led to the question, "How do the guidelines factor in to the newly revised design review process anyway?"

As they traced the process through the current code language for the downtown zones (Milwaukie Municipal Code (MMC) Section 19.304), the downtown site and building design standards (MMC Section 19.508), and the downtown design review process (MMC Section 19.907), they concluded that the prominence of the design guidelines has been significantly reduced by the code updates of 2015. **Mr. Kelper** attempted to review those 3 sections with the group but experienced some difficulties—the computer was not functioning to allow network or internet access, and code sections 19.508 and 19.907 did not appear to have been included in the group members' reference notebooks.

But he walked through the sections verbally and attempted to outline for the group the review process as established in the current code.

Mr. Kelper noted the apparent disconnect between the code and the guidelines, explaining that an applicant has the option of demonstrating compliance with a limited set of design standards and so avoid having to address any of the guidelines. Likewise, where an applicant cannot meet a specific design standard, only those guidelines that have some relation to that standard would be applicable. This appears to make many of the guidelines irrelevant for design review.

Member Jones provided more background on the design review amendments in the context of the recent Moving Forward Milwaukie project, explaining the effort to provide developers with more certainty in what had previously been a very discretionary process. During the last recession, the lack of a more clear and objective track contributed to a sense that downtown development Milwaukie was too risky, given so much uncertainty about what one could expect from the design review process. The City established a finite set of design standards to provide that option.

Mr. Kelper acknowledged that, the City has not processed an application for downtown design review that triggered more than Type I review under the recently revised review process, so there has been little practical experience and troubleshooting for the updated code. Staff had a very limited understanding of the revised relationship between the DDG and MMC 19.304, 19.508, and 19.907. He asserted that, given this new perspective, it might make the most sense to pause in the effort to update the DDG and instead expand the discussion to consider whether a full-scale revision to the DDG was warranted, including perhaps somehow pulling the DDG into the code itself.

There was collective agreement that the potential of having some of the less tangible concepts of the DDG (such as the "Milwaukie Character" element) was not ideal, and that it would be useful to better understand the way the revised review process worked. **Mr. Kelper** offered to develop a flowchart for the downtown design review process and to ensure that the members had copies of MMC 19.508 and 19.907 for discussion at the next meeting. He also agreed to see what else he could learn about the history and intent of the recent code amendments, and to provide the group with a comparative map of the previous downtown sub-zones.

7.0 Other Business/Updates

7.1 Officer elections (Chair, Vice Chair)

Mr. Kelper explained the roles of Chair and Vice Chair. The Chair facilitates the meetings and represents the committee as needed, including at Planning Commission or City Council meetings. The Vice Chair fills in if the Chair is not available. **Member Jones** and **Member Lauren Loosveldt** expressed willingness serve in either position. They agreed to a coin toss to decide the issue for Chair, which **Member Loosveldt** won; **Member Jones** agreed to serve as Vice Chair.

8.0 Design and Landmarks Committee Discussion Items – None

9.0 Forecast for Future Meetings:

April 3, 2017	DDG revisions – Format TBD
May 1, 2017	TBD

The newly elected **Chair Loosveldt** adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.



Lauren Loosveldt, Chair

Respectfully submitted,
Brett Kelper, Associate Planner